

# Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat *Incorporated*

AUGUST 1996

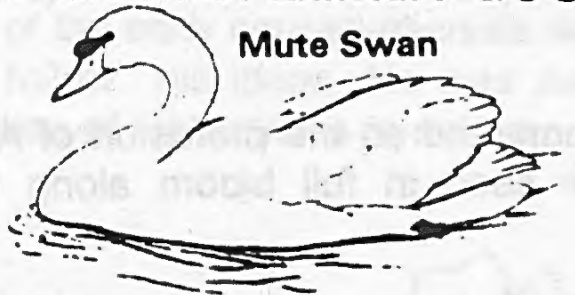
## EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting : Aug 2 Mr G Binns: Bird Reserves of the UK

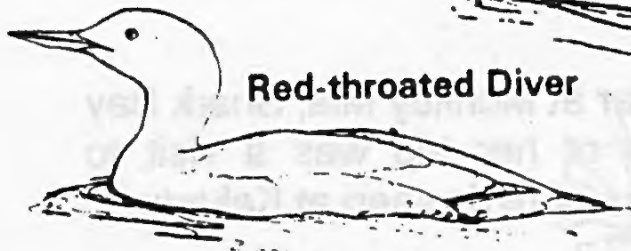
Meeting : Sep 6 Ms S Mitchell: Native Animal Rescue

Excursion : Aug 4 Enfield SP Regeneration: Mr R Hall

Excursion : Sep 8 Grenville / Enfield: P & J Sedgwick



Mute Swan



Red-throated Diver



Wren



Nightingale

President: Mr G Binns Ph  
Secretary: Mr L Fink  
Treasurer: Ms S Davison  
Editor: Mr A Dyson

Postal Address:  
PO Box 328W, Ballarat West, 3350.

Meetings are held at the Art Building,  
School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard  
St South, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Excursions commence from the corner  
of Sturt and Armstrong Sts., Ballarat, at  
9.30 am for full-day excursions or at 1.30  
pm for half-day excursions.

## FIELD REPORTS

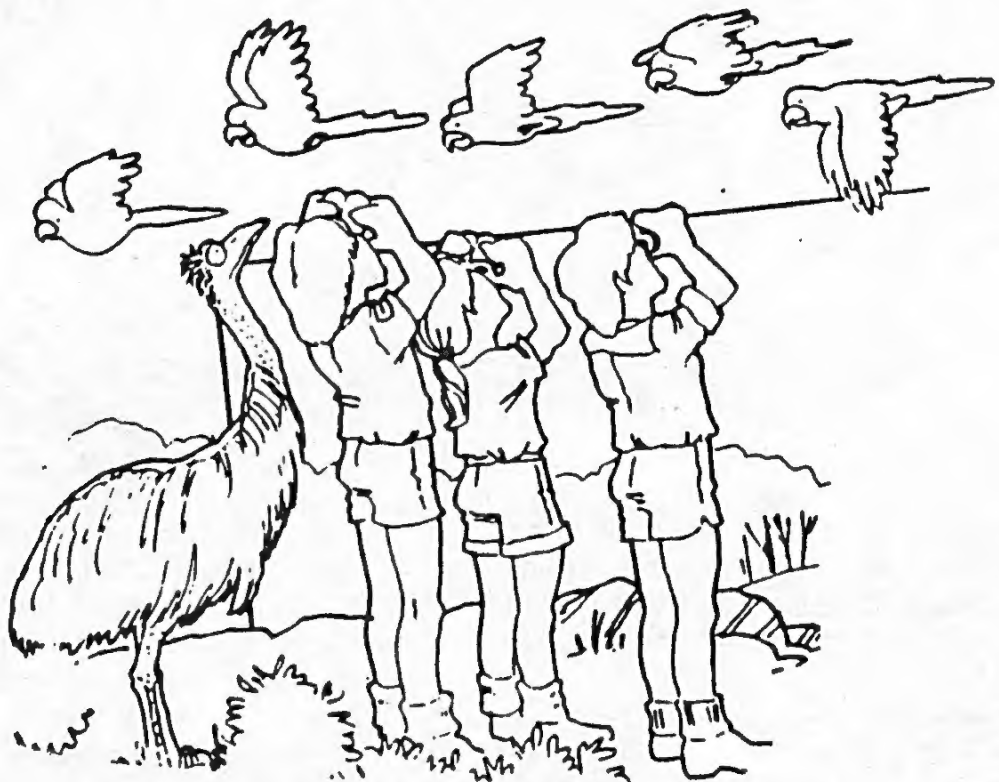
Del McDonnell - Ken and Del had travelled to Warrnambool to view the whales at Logans Beach.

Alan Morrison - 2 flocks (each of 50 to 60 birds) of White-eyed Ducks on Lake Wendouree.

John Gregurke - on a visit to the Bendigo area saw many wattles in flower. Of particular note - *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) in the Welsford Forest, *Acacia genistifolia* (Spreading Wattle), *Acacia paradoxa* (Hedge Wattle) and *Acacia ausfeldii* (Whipstick Cinnamon Wattle).

(Other members commented on the profusion of *Acacia baileyana* - Cootamundra Wattle seen in full bloom along the coast and at Mildura).

Avis Barlow - joined 6 dolphins in the water at Monkey Mia, Shark Bay near Broome in WA. Another highlight of her trip was a visit to Kakadu - she was amazed by the numbers of birds seen at Kakadu.



## DIARY DATES

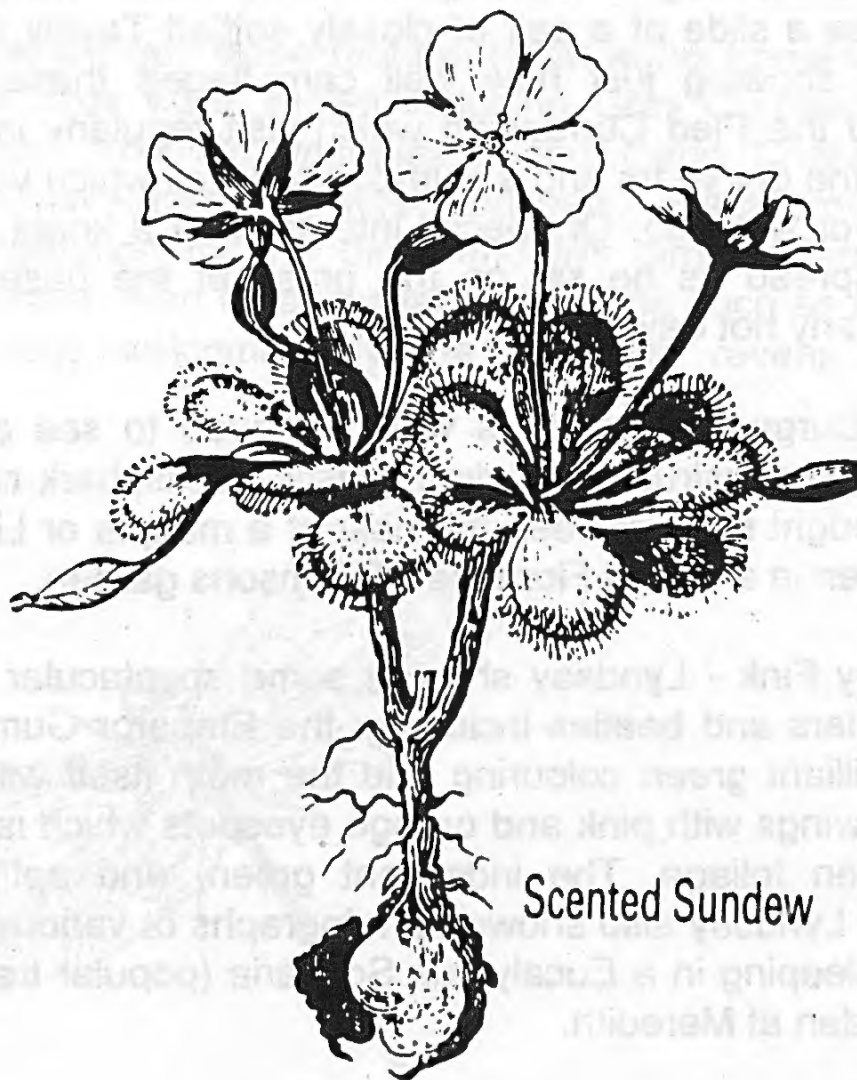
Tuesday 27 August 7.30 pm - Committee meeting at

GORDON CLARKE O.A.

Members will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Mr Clarke who died early in July.

Many will have visited his property near Linton where so much planting of native species had served to attract large numbers of birds.

Mr Clarke was one of the early conservationists who influenced others to appreciate and follow his ideas. He was awarded the Order of Australia in recognition of his services to nature.



Scented Sundew



## MEMBER'S NIGHT (WILDLIFE IN THE BACKYARD)

Thanks to those members who shared experiences with us at our meeting in July. Those who contributed to the evening included:

Alan Morrison - Alan brought along a series of aerial photographs taken over Ballarat during the 1930's. Members spent some time comparing "then and now". It was interesting to note the open lands around Wendouree which is now so suburban.

Ken McDonnell - Ken presented a "graduated study" and an interesting variety of slides including various lichens and fungi, insects, plants, birds and animals.

The McDonnell balcony is a particularly good viewing spot. Insects are attracted to the light at night and consequently other visitors are attracted like frogs and a regular visitor - the Tawny Frogmouth. We also saw a slide of a pair of closely settled Tawny Frogmouths on a branch showing just how well camouflaged these birds are. Ken showed the Pied Currawong which visit regularly in February/March during the dry years and a Buff-banded Rail which visited for 2 weeks a year or two ago. Of special interest was a koala, head down and limbs spread as he sat on the grass at the base of a tree on a particularly hot day.

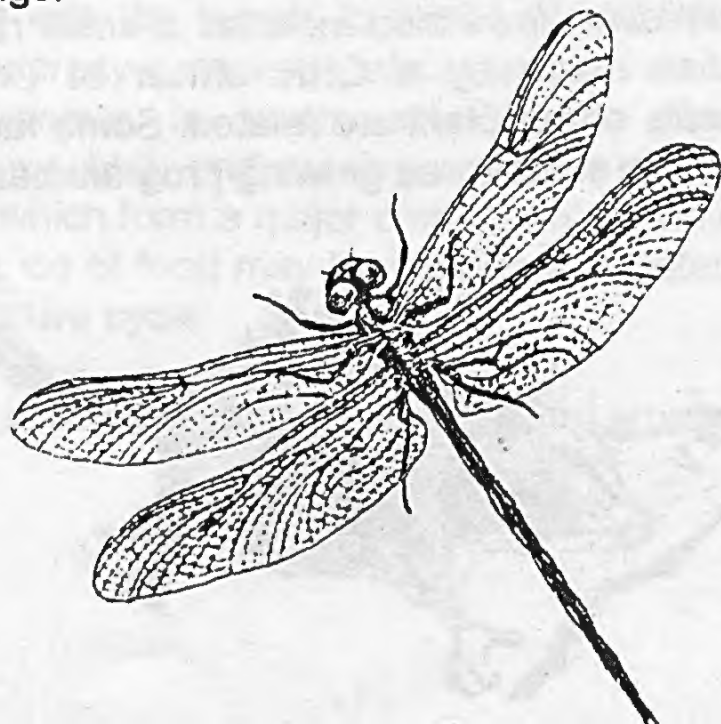
Helen Burgess - members were intrigued to see and examine the large nest constructed of wires, plastic, sticks, bark and various fibres. It is thought to have been the nest of a magpie or Little Raven which had been in a tree in Florence Williamsons garden.

Lyndsay Fink - Lyndsay showed some spectacular slides of moths, caterpillars and beetles including: the Emperor Gum Moth caterpillar with brilliant green colouring and the moth itself with broad orange-brown wings with pink and orange eyespots which is a dramatic sight on green foliage. The iridescent green, and aptly named, Jewel Beetle. Lyndsay also showed photographs of various skinks, and of a koala sleeping in a Eucalyptus Scoparia (popular tree with koalas) in his garden at Meredith.

Pat and Bill Murphy - showed a range of slides including the nest of a Brown Thornbill in the grass, a tortoise travelling to water and the Pyrenees Goanna (a fairly rare reptile) seen near Stuart Mill. Also slides of frogs, skinks, birds and a close view of a large grasshopper in the Murphy garden in Dana Street.

John Gregurke - more close-up photos of life in a garden - scale insects on a Lilly-pilly leaf and sooty mould growing on the exudate of the scale insect. Insects shown included a Praying Mantis usually resident in the Gregurke Wendouree garden but not seen last summer. The Golden Orb Spider which was a resident for a couple of years but has not been seen for several years now. Plants included the *Melaleuca Linariifolia* (Snow-in-summer) in full flower and a budding and a flowering *Banksia Ericifolia* with glorious golden bronze flowers.

Frank Harrap - Frank showed video footage taken at his home in Mt Helen. A variety of birds were shown including Grey Currawongs, Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, magpies, Gang Gang Cockatoo, Eastern Spinebills, Little Raven and Musk Lorikeets. Frank provides plenty of native vegetation for the birds and fills bird feeders up weekly as a supplement. Also meat (usually with bone such as lamb necks) is particularly welcomed by the magpies, ravens and currawongs.



## NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

*Whirrakee* (Bendigo FNC) - July issue has an interesting summary of a talk given to their club by Alan Read from the Gould League. The League is undertaking a Time Lines Project which aims to produce local calendars based on sequence of natural events. Alan Read challenged the Bendigo group to organise a local workshop to construct a local Time Line. The article also refers to observations and study the speaker has done in Victoria and in particular at his own property near Yea.

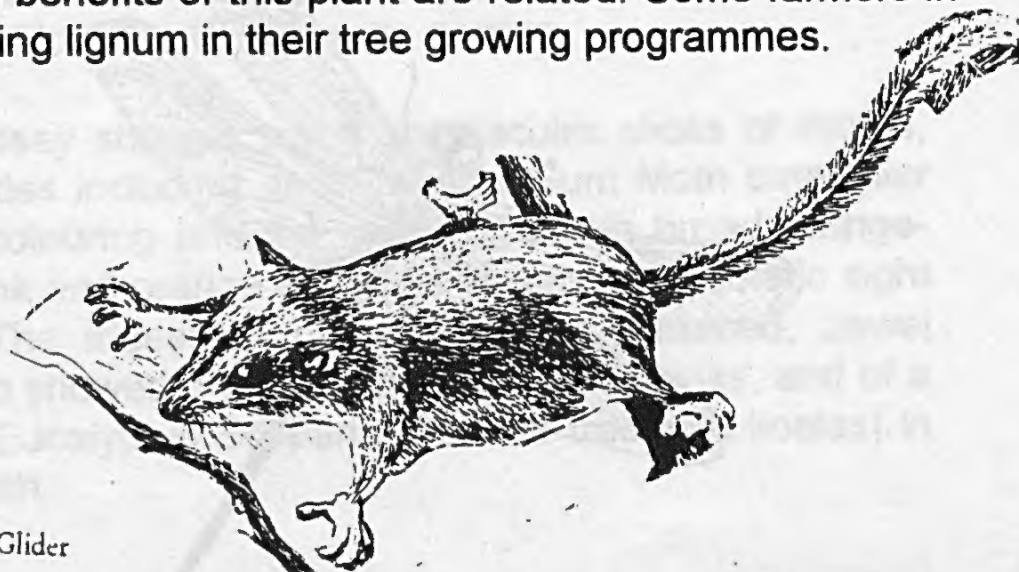
*Whirrakee* also includes an report on a talk by Brian Coman on rabbits and the calicivirus.

*Field Nats News* (FNC of Victoria) - June issue includes the FNC Calendar July to December. This gives details of meetings and excursions for the rest of 1996. Talks include subjects such as geology, ants, Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies, excursions include trips to Douglas (beyond the Grampians) and the "Central Highlands".

This issue also includes a report on a talk by Dr Chris Austen on yabbies.

*Land for Wildlife News* - May issue - an article concerning the biology, ecology, identification of and general significance of the ant. In some areas up to 150 species of ant can be identified in one hectare - great diversity. References are given for further reading.

This issue of *Land for Wildlife News* also includes a small report on lignum based on studies made by a CNR officer at Cohuna - problems with, and benefits of this plant are related. Some farmers in the area are including lignum in their tree growing programmes.



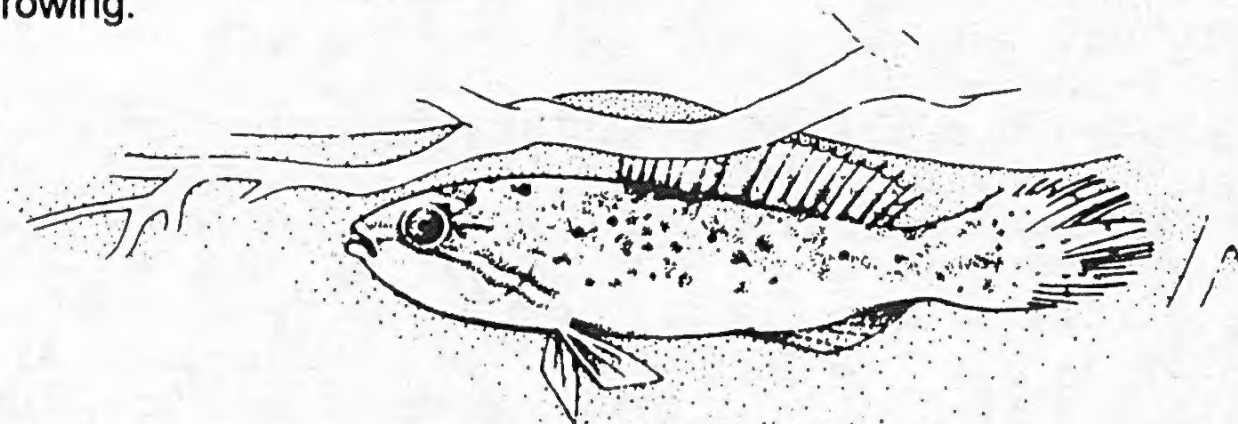
Feathertail Glider



A third article draws attention to State Government departments. In April the Victorian Government announced the creation of a new department incorporating the former departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Energy and Minerals and a number of other groups (such as the Titles Office and the Office of Geographic Data Co-ordination). The new organisation is called the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and includes all government functions dealing with land management.

The journals listed above are in our library and available for borrowing.

VD



Mammals Found in the Ballarat Area

No 11(b)

King River Eptesicus Eptesicus regulus

This species of bat derives its name from the King River in WA where it was first collected. Colonies comprise up to 9 individuals, often roosting with other species such as the Flat-headed Mastiff Bat and the Lesser Long-eared Bat. Mating occurs in autumn, the sperm remaining with the female to fertilise ova in early spring. The females form maternity colonies in late spring and a single young is born in the early summer. In south-west WA the period encompassing late pregnancy, birth and nursing coincides with the peak abundance of moths, which form a major component of their diet, indicating that the abundance of food may be important in determining the timing of the reproductive cycle.

Status is common and the bat is found around the Ballarat area.

Elfin

Little Forest Eptesicus.

*Eptesicus vulturnus*.

Order Chiroptera Suborder Microchiroptera

Family Vespertilionidae.

These Bats occupy habitats ranging from Sclerophyll forests through savanah woodlands to mallee and sparse desert woodlands. In solitary individuals or up to 50 in colonies, they roost in tree hollows, old buildings, timber stacks and sometimes sharing hollows with possums and tree martins. They hunt flying insects from just below the canopy to about 2 metres above the ground, they are very agile predators eating the their catch on the wing.

Females congregate in maternity colonies and when the single young is born it clings lightly to a thoracic nipple and are carried about by their mothers until about half grown when they are left in the roost, however, they are occasionally carried on hunting trips. When they are about 9 weeks old they are weaned and are independent but still remain in the colony.

The colonies disperse in autumn having already mated, after the birth of the young, when both sexes establish winter roosts, wher they undergo long periods of stupor.

Their status is common, limited in some areas. There are no subspecies, they would visit the Ballarat area.

Elfin.

